



Yosemite National Park Archives

Joseph Dixon Collection

Finding Aid



Hand-colored nitrate, Joseph Dixon; November 2, 1929

* Searchable digital image database of the Dixon Collection available to researchers on-site at the Yosemite National Park Archives.



This project made possible by the Yosemite Conservancy

History

Joseph Dixon started his career under Joseph Grinnell in 1908 as a Field Collector. By 1915, he had become the Assistant Curator of Mammals at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (MVZ) located at the University of California, Berkeley. Five years later he became an Economic Mammologist (1920). In 1931, he left the MVZ to begin working for the National Park Service (NPS).

Dixon began his association with the NPS at Yosemite National Park, where he was hired by George Melendez Wright, a wildlife biologist. Together with Ansell Hall, Wright and Dixon made a proposal to the NPS to complete the first field survey of wildlife in the western national parks. Unable to secure funding from the agency, Wright decided to personally finance the study. Dixon, Wright, and Ben Thompson conducted the survey and published the landmark work *Fauna of the National Parks in the United States: A Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks*. Published in 1933, the study became colloquially known as “Fauna 1”. The most important aim of the survey was to initiate the spread of science-based wildlife management policy. The authors proposed adopting goals which included the eradication of exotic species and the bolstering of dangerously low populations of native animals. Several of the published policies had been put forward by others, but until this survey had been completed, neither funding nor acceptance had been given them.

Post- “Fauna 1”, Dixon took over the Yosemite Field School, where he had been teaching while working on the survey. It was the first field school in the NPS and included seven weeks of lessons for nature guides. Dixon remained with the field school for eight years, while also working as a field biologist for Yosemite National Park, until his retirement in March 1946. During his career, both at the MVZ and with the NPS, he was an avid photographer.

Dixon died in June 1952 at the age of sixty-eight. He is credited with the first recorded discovery of a surf bird nest. A variety of ptarmigan, which he discovered, was named after him. He published several works, including *Wildlife Portfolio of the Western National Parks*, which includes several of the images from this collection.

Scope

This collection contains five different series: Series-1 Lantern Slides, Series-2 35mm Slides, Series-3 Negatives, Series-4 Prints, and Series-5 Notes and Manuscripts. Series-3 contains three subseries: “Fauna”, “Flora”, and “Scenics”. Series-4 contains three subseries: “Loose prints”, “Prints from ‘Box #7’”, and “Prints from ‘Box #10’”.

The collection is mainly comprised of images, with a few notes and manuscripts.

At Joseph Dixon’s death, his son, David Dixon, and a personal friend decided that the collection should go to the MVZ because he had spent a significant amount of his career there. However, after an examination of the collection, MVZ staff determined that most of the collection pertained more to the NPS than the museum. It was then donated to the Yosemite National Park Archives, the park that Dixon had worked in the most.

Arrangement

Although the staff at the Yosemite National Park Archives sought to preserve as much of the original order as possible, it was necessary to assert control over some parts of the collection. Series-3 (Negatives), for example, has an obvious order which had been disturbed- perhaps by shifting boxes or viewings of the collection. It is also possible that the images were in the process of being arranged and never finished. This arrangement seeks to restore what we can infer to be the (intended) original order. Series-4 (Prints) contains some images which were arranged, and some which were not. Subseries-01 (Loose prints) was unarranged; Yosemite Archives staff grouped them together by subject matter for the sake of accessibility. Staff made the decision to create Subseries-01, which includes all loose prints, in order to retain the integrity of Dixon's arrangement of Subseries-02 & -03.

This collection is organized into five series:

- Series-1: Lantern Slides, contains 723 images.
 - *These slides had been stored in numbered boxes, presumably organized by Joseph Dixon. Some of the boxes were titled by subject, while some were not. The slides were re-housed into archival boxes and assigned numbers, keeping the original order intact. Each box contains at least one box originally numbered by Dixon. The original box numbers are shown under the current (underlined) box number.*
- Series-2: 35mm Slides, contains 433 images.
 - *These 35mm slides were in their original order, and scanned accordingly.*
- Series-3: Negatives, contains 2,422 images split into three subseries: "Fauna", "Flora", and "Scenics".
 - *This series was re-arranged according to subject, while trying to restore the original numbering that Joseph Dixon had created.*
 - Within "Fauna":
 - Sub-subseries-01, "Animals"
 - Sub-subseries-02, "Birds"
 - Sub-subseries-03, "Deer"
 - Sub-subseries-04, "Ducks"
 - Within "Flora":
 - Sub-subseries-01, "Flowers"
 - Sub-subseries-02, "Plants"
 - Sub-subseries-03, "Trees"
 - Within "Scenics":
 - Sub-subseries-01, "Scenics"
 - Sub-subseries-02, "Buildings"
 - Sub-subseries-03, "Waterfalls"
- Series-4, Prints, contains 800 original images (and 577 duplicate images) split into three subseries: "Loose prints", "Prints from 'Box #7'", and "Prints from 'Box #10'".

- Subseries-01, "Loose prints", (item count: 531) is comprised of prints which were scattered throughout the collection, 'loose' but grouped together by topic.
- Subseries-02, "Prints from 'Box #7'", (item count: 660) is comprised of prints which were organized by topic and placed in a box labeled #7, presumably by Dixon.
- Subseries-03, "Prints from 'Box #10'", (item count: 186) is comprised of prints which were organized by topic and placed in a box labeled #10, presumably by Dixon.

Within Subseries 02 and 03, the images were organized topically in folders. These folder numbers have now become the sub-subseries. For example: looking at image number 4-02-06-100 you can infer the following- that it is a print, was previously organized, was a part of "Box #7", was in the sixth folder in "Box #7", and is the 100th print in that folder.

Duplicate images are noted by the ending ".a, .b, .c" ... etc., which is located at the end of the image number.

- Series-5, Documents, contains 233 documents, eight pages of negative sleeves, and four pages of newspaper clippings in four folders: "Plants," "Scientific Data: NPS," "Kings Canyon Papers," and "[Unnamed, from 'Box #10']."
 - The folders from this series were kept intact from Box #10 by their folder numbers.

**Note: Some of the photographs in this collection may not have been photographed by Joseph Dixon. Where possible, staff has identified the photographers responsible for these images. When searching the photo database, (Extensis Portfolio) for an image, please note the copyright status and photographer.*

Series-1 Lantern Slides

- Box 1
 - "Dixon Box 1": [not in collection]
 - "Dixon Box 2": 1-001 – 1-008
 - "Dixon Box 3": 1-009 – 1-014
 - "Dixon Box 4": 1-015 – 1-022
 - "Dixon Box 5": 1-023 – 1-035
 - "Dixon Box 6": 1-036 – 1-049
 - "Dixon Box 7": 1-050 – 1-059
 - "Dixon Box 8": [not in collection]
 - "Dixon Box 9": 1-060.1 – 1-067
 - "Dixon Box 10": 1-068 – 1-079
- Box 2
 - "Dixon Box 11": 1-080 – 1-095
 - "Dixon Box 12": 1-096 – 1-105
- "Dixon Box 13": 1-106 – 1-115
- "Dixon Box 14": 1-116 – 1-131
- "Dixon Box 15": 1-132 – 1-148
- "Dixon Box 16": 1-149 – 1-163
- "Dixon Box 17": 1-164 – 1-178
- Box 3 : "Yosemite, 1932 Alaska"
 - "Dixon Box 18": 1-179 – 1-191
 - "Dixon Box 19": 1-192 – 1-208
 - "Dixon Box 20": 1-209 – 1-216
 - "Dixon Box 21": 1-217 – 1-234
 - "Dixon Box 22": 1-235 – 1-243
 - "Dixon Box 23": 1-244 – 1-250
 - "Dixon Box 24": 1-252 – 1-268
- Box 4
 - "Dixon Box 25": 1-269 – 1-282

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- "Dixon Box 26": 1-283 – 1-298
- "Dixon Box 27": 1-299 – 1-307
- "Dixon Box 28": 1-308 – 1-317
- "Dixon Box 29": 1-318 – 1-322
- Box 5 : "Alaska 1914: Mt. McKinley, Ptarmigan"
 - "Dixon Box 30": 1-323 – 1-371
- Box 6 : "Wildlife of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Glacier Parks"
 - "Dixon Box 31": 1-372 – 1-419
- Box 7 : "Bears. (1) Ms. Unsci Asja Dnt Cut"
 - "Dixon Box 32": 1-420 – 1-470
- Box 8 : "Fur Animals"
 - "Dixon Box 33": 1-471 – 1-518
- Box 9: "Deer – Yosemite"
 - "Dixon Box 34": 1-519 – 1-570
- Box 10: "Wildlife, landscape of Sequoia, Yosemite, & Alaska"
 - "Dixon Box 35": 1-571 – 1-633
- Box 11
 - "Dixon Box 36": 1-634 – 1-653
- Box 12
 - "Dixon Box 37": 1-654 – 1-672
- Box 13
 - "Dixon Box 38": 1-673 – 1-692
- Box 14
 - "Dixon Box 39": 1-693 – 1-711
- Box 15
 - "Dixon Box 40": 1-712 – 1-720

Total Lantern Slide Item count: 723

Series-2 **35mm Slides**

- Box 1: 2-001 – 2-432

Total 35 mm Slide Item count: 433

Series-3 **Negatives**

Fauna

- Box 1: Animals [1 of 4]: 3-1-1-001 – 3-1-1-122
- Box 2: Animals [2 of 4]: 3-1-1-123 – 3-1-1-200
- Box 3: Animals [3 of 4]: 3-1-1-201 – 3-1-1-273
- Box 4: Animals [4 of 4]: 3-1-1-274 – 3-1-1-344
- Box 5: Birds [1 of 3]: 3-1-2-001 – 3-1-2-095
- Box 6: Birds [2 of 3]: 3-1-2-096 – 3-1-2-179
- Box 7: Birds [3 of 3]: 3-1-2-180 – 3-1-2-231
- Box 8: Deer [1 of 2]: 3-1-3-001 – 3-1-3-071
- Box 9: Deer [2 of 2]: 3-1-3-072 – 3-1-3-170
- Box 10: Ducks [1 of 2]: 3-1-4-001 – 3-1-4-092
- Box 11: Ducks [2 of 2]: 3-1-4-093 – 3-1-4-176

Flora

- Box 12: Flowers [1 of 4]: 3-2-1-001 – 3-2-1-101
- Box 13: Flowers [2 of 4]: 3-2-1-102 – 3-2-1-216
- Box 14: Flowers [3 of 4]: 3-2-1-217 – 3-2-1-324
- Box 15: Flowers [4 of 4]: 3-2-1-325 – 3-2-1-365
- Box 16: Plants: 3-2-2-001 – 3-2-2-028
- Box 17: Trees: 3-2-3-001 – 3-2-3-105

Scenics

- Box 18: Scenics[1 of 7]: 3-3-1-0001 – 3-3-1-0184
- Box 19: Scenics[2 of 7]: 3-3-1-0185 – 3-3-1-0320

- Box 20: Scenics[3 of 7]: 3-3-1-0321 – 3-3-1-0423
- Box 21: Scenics[4 of 7]: 3-3-1-0424 – 3-3-1-0508
- Box 22: Scenics[5 of 7]: 3-3-1-0509 – 3-3-1-0600
- Box 23: Scenics[6 of 7]: 3-3-1-0601 – 3-3-1-0754
- Box 24: Scenics[7 of 7]: 3-3-1-0755 – 3-3-1-0901
- Box 25: Buildings: 3-3-2-001 – 3-3-2-027
- Box 26: Waterfalls: 3-3-3-001 – 3-3-3-038

Total Negative Item count: 2,422

Series-4

Prints

Loose Prints

- Box 1:
 - Animals: 4-01-1-01 – 4-01-1-22
 - Birds: 4-01-2-01 – 4-01-2-86
 - Bird Nests: 4-01-3-01 – 4-01-3-92
- Box 2:
 - Deer: 4-01-4-01 – 4-01-4-46
 - Field School: 4-01-5-01 – 4-01-5-01
 - Mountains: 4-01-6-01 – 4-01-6-15
 - Plants and Trees: 4-01-7-01 – 4-01-7-19

- Scenics: 4-01-8-01 – 4-01-8-16
- Waterfalls: 4-01-9-1 – 4-01-9-9

Prints from "Box #7"

- Box 3:
 - Folder #1: 4-02-01-01 – 4-02-01-13
 - Folder #2: 4-02-02-01 – 4-02-02-51
 - Folder #3, "Coyote": 4-02-03-01 – 4-02-03-16
 - Folder #4, "Elk": 4-02-04-01 – 4-02-04-09

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- Folder #5, "Contact Prints Used in Wildlife Portfolio": 4-02-05-01 – 4-02-05-38
- Folder #6, [field school, elk]: 4-02-06-01 – 4-02-06-110
- Box 4:
 - Folder #7, "Deer": 4-02-07-01 – 4-02-07-71
 - Folder #8, "Scenics": 4-02-08-01 – 4-02-08-43
- Box 5:
 - Folder #9, "13 Prairie Chicken [Wildlife Portfolio NPS]": 4-02-09-01 – 4-02-09-41
 - Folder #10: 4-02-10-01 – 4-02-10-12
 - Folder #11: 4-02-11-01 – 4-02-11-05
- Folder #12, "Bryce": 4-02-12-01 – 4-02-12-04
- Folder #13, "Yosemite": 4-02-13-01 – 4-02-13-04
- Folder #14, "Marmot [and Squirrels]": 4-02-14-01 – 4-02-14-22
- Folder #15, "Caribou [and other Mammals]": 4-02-15-01 – 4-02-15-04
- Box 6:
 - Folder #16, "Grand Canyon": 4-02-16-01 – 4-02-16-60
 - Folder #17, "Birds": 4-02-17-01 – 4-02-15-42
 - Folder #18, [Provenance Samples]: 7 sleeves of information.

Prints from "Box #10"

- Box 7:
 - Folder #1 "Plants": 4-03-01-01
- Box 8:
 - Folder #6 "Plants": 4-03-06-01 – 4-03-06-14
 - Folder #7 "Dogs": 4-03-07-01 – 4-03-07-12
- Folder #8 "Falls": 4-03-08-01 – 4-03-08-28
- Folder #9 "Yosemite": 4-03-09-01 – 4-03-09-84

Total Print Item count: 1,377

Series-5 Documents

- Folder #1: "Plants." 46 sleeved pages of documents & one image (print) 4-03-01-01.
- [Folder #2: missing]
- Folder #3: "Scientific Data: NPS." 18 sleeved pages of documents.
- Folder #4: "Kings Canyon Papers" [from "Box #10"]. 68 sleeved pages of documents.
- Folder #5: [unnamed, from "Box # 10"]. 4 sleeved pages of documents.

Item count: 233, plus eight pages of negative sleeves and four pages of newspaper clippings.

Series-6

Boxes

- 1 Large Metal Box containing other examples of boxes that Joseph Dixon used for storage. There is a wooden box for slides, and other examples of small boxes that originally contained Joseph Dixon's glass plates, etc..